

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0830

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T JAKARTA 5718

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, ID, AS

SUBJECT: VISIT BY AUSTRALIAN EMBOFFS TO EAST TIMOR

1. SUMMARY: AFTER VISIT TO 10 POPULATION CENTERS IN EAST TIMOR, AUSTRALIAN EMBOFFS CONCLUDED THAT INTEGRATION WITH INDONESIA IS CLEARLY A FACT AND IS IRREVERSIBLE. THEY BELIEVE THAT LOW-LEVEL GUERRILLA RESISTANCE BY FRETELIN OUTSIDE THE MAIN CENTERS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME BUT THAT IT WILL NOT POSE A THREAT TO INDONESIAN CONTROL OF EAST TIMOR. END SUMMARY.

2. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HAS SHARED WITH US A REPORT OF VISIT BY ITS DCM AND ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR TO 10 SEPARATE CENTERS IN EAST TIMOR DURING LAST WEEK IN APRIL. THEY ASKED THAT IT BE TIGHTLY HELD. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF THEIR REPORT.

3. THE VISIT WAS TIGHTLY STRUCTURED BY THE INDONESIANS AND THERE WERE MANY APPARENTLY REHEARSED PRESENTATIONS DEALING
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WITH "FRETELIN LIES," JOY OF INTEGRATION, ACCUSATIONS THAT AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS OFFICIALS HAD PROVIDED FRETELIN WITH ARMS AND COMPALINTS ABOUT RADIO AUSTRALIA. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS FLEXIBILITY IN THE ITINERARY AND WORTH-WHILE INFORMATION AND IMPRESSIONS WERE GAINED.

4. AS REGARDS SECURITY, INDONESIAN AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES

CLEARLY CONTROL THE TOWNS AND ENVIRONS. SMALL MOUNTAINOUS AREAS OUTSIDE BAUCAU, NEAR BOBONARO AND BEHIND LIQUICA ARE CONTROLLED BY FRETILIN FORCES, WHICH ARE SAID TO NUMBER 400-500 MEN. BETWEEN THESE TWO AREAS IS A KIND OF NO-MAN'S LAND INTO WHICH GOVERNMENT FORCES CAN MOVE IF THEY WISH BUT WHERE FRETILIN CAN ALSO MAKE RAIDS FOR FOOD. THE INDONESIAN-PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES WOULD SEEM TO EXERCISE AS MUCH INDIRECT CONTROL OVER THIS THIRD AREA, WHICH MAY CONTAIN BULK OF POPULATION, AS PORTUGUESE DID AT THEIR ZENITH.

5. INDONESIANS ARE NOT ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN SEARCH AND DESTROY OPERATIONS AGAINST FRETILIN BUT ARE WAITING FOR FOOD AND MEDICINE SHORTAGES TO FORCE FRETILIN FOLLOWERS TO COME OVER. FEAR OF RETALIATION BY THEIR FELLOW TIMORESE, NOT THE INDONESIANS, IS REPORTEDLY CAUSING FRETILIN TO HOLD OUT. THE CLAIM THAT THE PRESENCE OF INDONESIAN FORCES HELPS TO PREVENT REVENGE KILLINGS ALSO SEEMS CREDIBLE.

6. THE CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION SEEMS ALMOST ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF TIMORESE WHILE SENIOR MILITARY AND POLICE POSITIONS ARE HELD BY INDONESIANS. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO APPEAR GOOD. MOST OF THE TEACHERS, DOCTORS, AND OTHER PROFESSIONS SEEM TO BE INDONESIAN WHILE WEST TIMORESE FILL MANY OF THE LESSER-SKILLED JOBS. THERE IS A DELIBERATE POLICE OF INDONESIAIZING THE CURRENT SCHOOL AGE GENERATION, WHICH SEEMS TO BE PROGRESSING SATISFACTORILY.

7. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE UNABLE TO OBTAIN
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ANY EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DUNN'S CLAIMS, EXCEPT PERHAPS IN A VERY GENERAL SENSE. IN SEVERAL OF THEIR FRANKER CONVERSATIONS, THE TIMORESE ADMITTED THERE HAD BEEN KILLING ON BOTH SIDES AND THAT THE CLAIM THAT PRO-INDONESIAN FORCES HAD COMMITTED SOME ATROCITIES HAD SOME TRUTH. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THERE WERE MANY ALLEGATIONS OF FRETILIN ATROCITIES. LEADERS OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN DILI AND LIQUICA DENIED DUNN'S CLAIM OF MAS KILLING OF CHINESE IN THOSE TWO PLACES.

8. THERE WERE FREQUENT ALLEGATIONS THAT A SMALL GROUP OF AUSTRALIANS WERE TRYING TO POISON RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND INDONESIA, INCLUDING EAST TIMOR AS A PROVINCE OF INDONESIA. THERE WERE FREQUENT SET-PIECE ALLEGATIONS OF AUSTRALIANS SMUGGLING ARMS TO FRETILIN. IN BAUCAU THERE WERE SPECIFIC CHARGES THAT AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS OFFICIALS AND MR. FRANK FAVARO HAD ASSISTED FRETILIN. TIMORESE ALSO CLAIM THAT AUSTRALIANS HAD PROVIDED FRETILIN WITH RADIOS AND HAD MADE BROADCASTS OVER THESE RADIOS. NEVERTHELESS, THE TWO AUSTRALIAN

OFFICERS ENCOUNTERED NO GENUINE ANIMOSITY DURING THE VISIT AND THERE WERE EXPRESSIONS OF THANKS FOR AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE RED CROSS.

9. DURING A TWO-HOUR VISIT TO BALIBO, THE OFFICERS UNCOVERED NO INFORMATION WHICH ADDED MEANINGFULLY TO WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN REGARDING THE FATE OF THE FIVE AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS.

10. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS CONFUSION IN WHAT WAS SAID IN DIFFERENT PLACES AND DISCREPANCIES IN DOCUMENTATION, AUSTRALIAN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IS GETTING THROUGH TO THE PEOPLE. THERE IS GREAT SCOPE FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, PARTICULARLY MEDICINES.
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